Project I.D. No.

NAME: Akiyama, Onatsu DATE OF BIRTH: 9/10/1900 PLACE OF BIRTH: Hiroshima
Age: 77 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: Khoto Ka (8th grade)

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1921 Age: 22 M.S. M Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. Farmer 2. Fish/Grocery store owner 3. Delivery person
Place of residence: 1. Florin, California 2. Oakland, Ca. 3. Florin, Ca.
Religious affiliation: Buddhist Church
Community organizations/activities:

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center: Fresno Assembly Center
Name of relocation center: Denson, Ark. & Christal City, New Mexico
Dispensation of property: Neighbors, friends, US govt Names of bank/s: Bank of America
Jobs held in camp: 1. Bathroom cleaner 2.
Jobs held outside of camp:
Left camp to go to: Japan

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: June 30, 1959
Address/es: 1. Japan (13 years) 2. Sacramento, California
3.
Religious affiliation: Buddhist Church
Activities: 1. 2. 3.
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death:

Name of interviewer: H. Takarabe Date: 6/20/1977 Place: Sacramento, Calif.
Translator
H-TAKARABE

NAME: Onatsu Akiyama

AGE: 77 Years Old

DATE OF BIRTH: Sep. 10, 1900

PLACE OF BIRTH: Hiroshima

YEAR OF ENTRY INTO THE USA: 21

OCCUPATION: Store Owner

CAMP: Denson, Arkansus

Christal City, New Mexico

Date of Interview: June 20, 1977

Place of Interview: Sacramento

Interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe

Translator: Heihachiro Takarabe

Q: What is your name, please?

A: My name is Onatsu Akiyama. My husband's name is Michiharu Akiyama.

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in Hiroshima, Japan. My husband was born in Hiroshima, too. He came to America when he was 19 years old. I came here when I was 22 years old.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born on Sep. 10, in the 33rd year of Meiji. My husband was born on Ap. 10, in the 27th year of Meiji. This means that I was born on 1900 and 1894 for my husband.

Q: I would like you to describ your family for me.

A: My family had a store where we sold everything such as fabric, sake and the rest. This store expanded and became a big chain. They own at least 22 restaurant, now. The main store had the highest gross sale on cigarets and Sake in town. They said that after the war, they were able to bring these stores up to the pre-War standard. Because once this store was failure. You see my maiden name is Okada.

Q: What kind of a man was your father?

A: He was an honest man. He was very honest. When they shiped rice on a wargon and delivered it to Sakayo(Sake maker) or other places, they asked him to carry cash for them, since it was very complicated to write a check

at that time. He used to deliver 13 Ri (26 miles) on the wargon. My father's name was Toyosuke, so people called him Toyo San, Toyo San. He was such a popular man.

He died when he was 65 years old. My father was like a Banker in a sense. So the people back in Japan were proud that the stores are built back up to my father's estate. Sometimes I wonder if it was because my ancestors worked deligently, the store was able to build back up again later. It is very important to pay respect for ancestors. The success and failure do come in waves. The other day I received a letter from my younger brother's wife saying, "Please rejoyce with us, because we were able to build this store up to this level." So it must really prospering.

It did have a tough time when my older brother managed it. It was right after I came to America when the store was declining. He went into Shoyu business. In order to get lumbers cheeper, he brought a hill. However, it did not go well and ended up in failure. However, because they worked deligently, the result has been very good.

My older brother also wrote to me in detail. He said that he lost real estate, but the store is doing very well.

Q: What was your mother like?

A: She was a very able woman. She was able to do anything that a man could do. For example, she was able to climb up on the roof and nail down singles. The only thing she couldn't do was to write. My father was able to do that. He was a taxcollector in the village and had a right to vote.

Even though my mother was not able to write, she did everything else. So my nephews were also able people, too. My husband used to say, "Mama, you aren't worse a little finger of your mother?"

One of my nephew went to Korea to teach Kendo. At that time my mother went alone with him. She stayed with him for 3 years. She went alone because he didn't have a wife, yet. While she was in Korea, she went around and tought farmers how to make "mino" and "Mushiro" in the nearby villages. When I visited her, she showed me a newspaper article about her. It described about 60 years old woman serving Korean villages. They used to dry red beans on the bridges, and pebbles got into the beans. When I brought "azuki" (red beans) the sand used to be mixed in it, so my mother rought them how to make Mushiro so that they could dry beans on the mushiro. After that there were no more sand and pebbles mixed in red brans.

She was really an able person. She tought them how to make 'Goza", "Mino", "Mushiro" and "Waraji" and others.

Her activities were written up on a newspaper, so I know she was a really able person. She died at the age of 91. She was a very healthy person. I went back to Japan after the war and then came back here 13 years afterwards. So I think I'll live to be an old age.

Q: Whatelse do you remember about your mother?

A: She was a deligent person. She was a very kind person, too. When a begger came around, she used to feed them. I was really impressed by her. You see, I am only daughter, though I had an older brother and a younger brother. My older brother go married. So my sister-in-law used to go out early in the morning to gather up grass for horses. We also had some farming to do to feed ourselves. My brother used to tell me to get up because his wife would bome home, soon from early morning work. He used to pull "Futon" away from me. I was such a spoiled girl. However, when I came to America, I really regretted the fact that I was such a spoiled girl, because I really had a rough time making adjustment.

Q: Was your mother very strict?

A: Yes, she was. I learned how to saw for 6 years. So I had to go shoping fabric, thread, bottens and the rest. There was only 5 cho (5 blockes) to the store. So she knew exactly how long it would take for me to walk. When I got delayed, she would already be on her way to look for me. She was very short tempered. However, I used

to go to see shows often. My older brother was a very kind person. He took me to the shows and also came to pick me up, too.

Q: Who scolded you? Your mother or father?

A: I never was scolded by my father. He used to drink Sake a litte every night. My father invited me to drink with him, just one sakazuki though, now and then. So I learned to like drink Sake. I also like to drink wine, beer, or other drinks,a little bit at a time.

Q: How did you like school?

A: Yes, I went up to"Khoto Ka" (2 years after elementary school). You see in order to go to Middle School, we had to take an entrance examination. However, I felt that it would be shame if I didn't pass, so instead, I asked my parents to send me to sawing school. I went to that school over a year. So I worked as a dressmaker and I felt that I didn't have to get married, because I heard that it would be very tough if I were married. So I used to tell my parents that I didn't want to get married. I accumulated a lot of money from my work. So I was single until I was 21 years old. In my home town girls used to get married when they were 16 and 17 years old. However, because I didn't get married until I was 21, people used to say, "Tokosa Mise's girl is a Tomboy!" They used to call our store, "Yokosa Mise". They used to laugh at me.

Q: What did you do to play when you were in elementary school?

A: I don't remember well, but I was a very spoiled girl, and was very sickly. So my older brother used to bring me back from school on his back when it sknowed or rained. It used to snow up to my knee. When I got back, they had a hot water ready in a wash tub and socked my feet. My brother was a very gentle brother. I also had a younger brother. He was a huge man, over 250 lb., just like my third son.

Q: Did you like school very much?

A: Yes, I did. I wasn't that good in history because I didn't have that much of memory, however, I was very good at "Soroban". I used to stand infront of the class and call out numbers for addition as I also did it on my soloban. It was my best subject. I can do it still. When I go to stores, I can calculate a lot faster than they do on machines.

I sure didn't have much memory However, I got A+ on my drowing (drawing) and Charigraphy (calligraphy). My older brother was also very good at it. He was asked to write words on grave stones. He was that good. My younger brother was also very good at it, too. He is over 80 years old, now. He still write to me with a very neat handwriting.

Q: What was the most memorable event in your childhood?

A: I suppose it would be that everybody took care of me very well. I might even be spoiled because of that. I was also well liked by my teachers, too. I used to go over to her (my teacher) house and ate dinner and slept there. These things would be the ones which I remember the most.

Q: How about your friends?

A: Yes, I still have friends from this period. Masayo san, for example, lived very close to us. So we were constantly visiting one another. She was a very earnest person and she still is. I went back to visit my home town about 13 years ago and met with my old friends. It was such a wonderful experience.

Q: Then you graduated from 8th grade.

A: Yes, I did. I think my husband did the same. I think it was from my time that elementary school became 6 years. After that I attended Kotoka (school after elementary school). I was not good at running. I still have a bad leg. When I was small, my mother used to take me to visit shurines. However, I was so tired that I wouldn't move. I would sit down and asked my mother to hire "Richsher". I was such a spoiled girl. However, when I came to America I had to learn a lot, because Papa (my husband) was having a very rough time. He used to tell me, "You look very good, having big bones like that of a man, but you can't do a thing!!" A human being must be disciplined, polished and trained wherever he is

through sickness, poverty, pain, suffering and hardship, and then for the first time he can become a part of human race. So you can say that going smooth looks good, but it's not so good from this point of view of becoming a real human being.

Q: You said that you were a dressmaker for 6 years.

A: Yes, I was. You see I was tought how to saw by my mother. I used to charge 15 sen for sawing a pant and shurt. I used to keep a book and at the end of the month I would add them up and I would give a half to my mother and keep the other half for myself and saved it in a bank. During that 6 years I accumulated a little over 800 Yen. It's a big money, isn't it. It's the money I saved after bying thread and everything I needed for my business.

Well, when I got married, we left home town and went to Yokohama. I didn't know that my husband didn't have much money. We left home early, 9 days ahead of time, because my mother kept saying to me that I didn't have to go to America to get marry. She could have found a good husband in Japan, near home town. Well, we left home early and stayed in an inn in Yokohama. However, my husband didn't go out into the town. Instead, he slept all day. He pretended that he was drunk and sleepy with Whisky, I think it was Whisky when I come to think of it. Actually he didn't have enough money to take me out. I must have been very difficult for him. You see, I came

here with the idea of staying only 3 years. In case we failed here, then we could open a store to sell school materials such as pencils, papers and others. That's what I was thinking. However, I could not come home in 3 years, nor in 5 years. I was able to visit home on the 9th year.

Q: Just a minutes, please. When you were a dressmaker what kind of dress did you make?

A: You remember seeing a man who pulls "Richsher"? I used garments like that. It had pants which looked like horseback riding pants, and various kind of shirts, similar to what we have now. So I must have made at least 6 pairs like that a day. Of course I charged 25 sen for those which needed more time and more difficult stiches. It's a long time ago, 60 years ago that I did all these things.

Well, you see, its very interesting. This is the money that nobody knew about. I went to a bank at a time when no one was around, so none of my family knew about it. There was a very honest man in the village by the name of Mr. Kakuichi Harada. When I left the village I asked him to hold that money for me saying that I would be back in three years.

When I visited Japan after 9 years, my father cried and said, "I'm very sorry. I've done something wrong." So

I said, "I don't know what you are talking about, unless you tell me." Then he said, "When Toichi (the oldest brother) failed in business, Mr. Harada told me that he held 800 yen for you. He could not keep it secret any more because we were having such a difficult time."

So I said, "Please don't feel so bad. It was the money I earned before I married intoAkiyama family. And I'm glad that it helped you." Then he said, "Thank you for your understanding and concern." My husband's father had a strock a year after that, so I also helped him to come back, too.

We were very poor at that time when Papa borrowed some money from his friend and sent me home. I took 50 days vacation. When I came back for the 2nd time, I didn't go out at all (for sight seeing or even entertainment). Instead, I made contributions to village school, improved family grave sight (we had 2 of them), and also made a contribution to many places including building of a strong wall to prevent mud sliding behind the shrine in the village. I contributed all over the place in Akiyama's name. You see, I knew my father-in-law wasn't able to live long with his condition. So, I also made a "Rekidai Bako" (a large grave whith a large room to store bones of many generations) for the Akiyama family. I think it cost me 20,000 yen at that time.

They said that there were other brothers there and the cost should be shared by them all. However, I said that they were going to take care of my father-in-law and also take care of the grave, too. I wasn't able to do that because I was coming back to America. My father-in-law said that I should do something for my own village, school or something. I spent all the money I had for the memorial of Akiyama family. However, I did not leave the house at all, for 50 days. They were really happy about that. I also contributed something for the village fire station, too.

When we went back to Japan after the war, we were very poor and couldn't do anything for the village. So we should contributed to the community when we can. I was very happy that I was able to do something for other people.

When I think about our life, I regret that I did not keep a diary of our life.

Q: What was the circumstance which you and Mr. Akiyama got married?

A: Well, it's very interesting. You see I was an old maid, being single at the age of 21. There were 22 stores like ours in the village. So I felt that there was no future for our business. So that's why I went to Kobe and learned how to make Men's garments for 9 months. That's when I was 18 years old. I went there because

my aunt was there. When I went there for the first time my mother came to take me home, because I hadn't had my parents permission.

My aunt asked me why I didn't get my parents permission. So I said, "If I didn't leave home now, my older brother would leave home to go to the Army. Then I surely have to stay home." Well, then they promised me that when my older brother came home from the Army, then I could come to Kobe. My aunt became my witness to this. My brother came back in 2 years. So I was able to go to Kobe again.

In Kobe, about 9 months after I arrived, a palmist took a look at my palm. He said, "Oh, this is very strange. You should have left Japan for forign country a long time ago." He also said that I had rejected many offer for marriage in the past. It seemed as if this man knew everything about my past. He said, "There is one more proposal left. If you reject this one, then you will not have another opportunity at all."

It was in September when this happened. It's interesting isn't it. I returned to my home in November and in the first of Descenber my husband to be came back from America. He came to see me with a go-between. This go-between came over and said that Mr. Akiyama came back to Japan all of sudden. He was very much interested in bringing us together for "Omiai"(looking over for prospective spouse).

I was hearing this conversation from the store. You see, we had a fairly confortable life and marriage proposals were coming to us from very well to do families. As you know, family life in those well-to-do families were very rigid and felt very stifling. On the other hand I was raised as a spoiled girl and didn't know too much about rigid family style, so going to America was very attractive, because I felt that I could be free of such family rigidity.

You know, its funny, usually I didn't work with"Tohu" but I was so interested in the discussion that I pretended that I was working with "Tofu", because I could hear their conversation from there very well. I heard the go-between saying, "Then, I'll come to see you tonight. I'll bring the man over."

They said that this man was a big man. My younger brother said, "You want to marry him? even if he was 6ft giant, ha?" I was very shy talking about him with my brother. When he came over, he was indeed a huge man. He had to lower his head to come through the door. Then we went upstair to "Omiai". I was very fat and when I got to the upstair, I was out of breath. They, of course, did not eat beef at that time. They felt that cows were farmers' treasurs, because they did the works for them. So we did not eat meet, consequently I was very fat.

Well, we cooked meal outside and brought them back into

the house. I was 21 and he was already 27. I wanted to come to America very badly. So I tried to let him know that I was interested in him. So as I was pouring tea for him I touched his knee, hoping that he would get my message.

Well, I didn't know how he felt about me, but next day they said that he is coming to the town because of some business. I really wanted to tell him that I was interested in coming to America with him. So I waited for him all day. There was a two roads to my village. One was the regular street, the other was the short cut. So I waited for him at the regular street, but he must come through the short cut. Well, I missed the chance to tell him how I felt about coming to the USA.

Well, the contract of marriage was consummated on the 11th day. Until then I was very nurvous and worried. On top of that he had only a short time of stay in Japan. Finally the go-between came to tell us of the marriage proposal. Well, it was a quite ordeal. My father kept telling me that I didn't have to go to America to get married. He also said that he could find any good match for me around the village. It was so hard for me to listen to them that I left my home with my husband to Kobe 9 days before the departure time. You see, I didn't know that my husband didn't have enough money to live on for such a long time in an inn in Kobe. It

was 11 days after our marriage. That's why my husband was sleeping all day. He couldn't tell me that he didn't have enough money. You see I was such a spoiled girl that I suffered a lot later on.

Q: What did you do to tell him that you like him?

A: Oh, yes. It wasn't the tea cup, but it was the cat. She was on my lap and as I tried to pour tea for him I gave that cat to him. That's right. That's the time when I touched his knee inorder to tell him that I liked him. I suppose that was the only chance I had. Well, you know we didn't have any chance to tell each other how we felt about each ohter.

Then the trouble started at home. You see, I was the only daughter, so my father and mother did not want me to leave Japan. On top of that they wonted to check him out, too. My mother went to see Mr. Nobuso who lived in Onomuchi, about 31/2 Ri (7 miles) away from our house. She went to visit him 3 times. However, he was not at home all those times. He was the person who came back to Japan with my husband to be. Mr. and Mrs. Nobuso said, after finally meeting him, that my husband's father Motoji-Jisan, had a property worth $3,000. So if my husband brought back a wife, he could do anything he wanted to do, to have a store or get a job.

This Nobuso couple passed away, but their children still live here. I feel I still owe them something. So

when we were in Florin I used to visit them and reported to them how we were coming alone. We-l, he is a good friend of my father-in-law, Motoji-Jisan. So you know relationship develops in a very differnet and strange ways.

Q: So the proposal was accepted and you had a wedding celemony.

A: Yes. You know my father didn't want me to go, so he drunk 3 to 4"choshi" (sake bottle) though he only had one choshi a day before. I really had to make myself numb and tear away from them to come to America. That's how much my father wanted me to stay with him. It was a lot easier for my mother. She must have accepted the fact that I had to get marry. My husband was such a nice person that when my older brother went bankrupt, he sent him a lot of money. My father used to say that if he could, he would walk till his feet would be destryed, to reach America to thank my husband.

Q: You had a wedding celemony and then what happen?

A: Then we left home and went to Kobe. I felt that my father might change his mind, so I left home with my husband. Well, I must say I was brave. Then we stayed in a hotel, that's where my husband pretended that he had a cold and stayed in bed all day long. It wasn't that. If you went out, then he had to buy something for me, so he didn't got out. The only thing he brought me was a stocking and cream (facial). I kept it untill the world war II as our momento. He said that he came home

with $500 from America. You see my husband was married once to a woman from Lincoln, Calif. She was well liked by his father, Motoji-Jisan. That's why he got married. He must have been around 20 or so. She was only 15 years and 7 months. She was a very tiny girl. They had 40 acre of graps Ranch. When he tried to help her in the morning wiping the table, she would throw things around, because she didn't wont him to help him. She was late getting up in the morning. So she must have been a spoiled girl, too. They were married for 3 years. However, my husband was a very deligent and serious person, he must have thought that they did not have future together.

So he went to Lincoln and worked as a share cropper at a Pear Ranch. It was a 3 year contract. At that time he borrowed a quite bit of money from Kato Shoten (store) in Florin. He borroerf $3000. Her father and he worked together. During that time he chopped wood early in the morning and set tables before he went to work in the packing house. (When I cam back to Japan Mr. Kato brought a box of orange and $50 check. However, I could not accept that money because we still had that $3,000 loan. I did accept that orange, though.)

This is the reason why we didn't have even 5¢ in our pocket. Papa worked at Kato's Store, so his salaries and everything he earned were held by them. They did not give it to us.

It was around Feb. when I became pregnant. At that time I had a terrible mourning sickness. I wanted to eat something very vinigery. It was very hard. We couldn't buy rice to make "Okayu". When our neighbor gave us a sackfull of plum, about 5 lb, I ate them all at once. At that time I went to work to pick potatos. Sometimes I was so tired and crying that I couldn't distinguish between potatos and a hunk of dirt.

Q: What happend to that 15 years old girl?

A: Oh, yes. The reason why he went to Lincoln for 3 years was to make it such a way that she could reject him and leave him. He said that it took three years. It was hard because he had to make it in such a way that she would leave him, even though she liked him. They said that if she took it to court, she could win in America. So he had to do it that way.

She was from Okayama. That's why when he came back to Japan and married me, he went to Okayama. It was before we were married. He said that he was going to see a friend in Okayama. I interpreted it in a good way. I thought he was a very considerate person. At the same time, considering his age of 27, I thought that if a man wasn't married by that time, he is either a very good person or a very bad person. So I understood him to be a very good person. He went to Okayama with a taxi. It cost him a great deal, too. So we were very impressed.

Later on I asked him about that. Well, the real reason was to check their "Kosaki". It was a quite distance from there to Okayama. Even though Hiroshima and Okayama were neighbors. It took about 2 hours on train. So it was a long distance. Well, her former wife's name was returned to the original family, so he felt he was free to marry me. If her name was not returned to her family, which ment that on the record she was still married to him, then it would not look very good for him to marry me.

She was a very sickly person. When she got sick, she had to to to Sacramento and visit a doctor there, while she stayed at a hotel. It took a week to 10 days to get treatment. So that must be one of the reasons.

She was a very tiny person. I used to look around to see something which was left by her. I suppose I was very jealous. I found a stocking which was cut off at the top. It was too long for her. So she must have been a tiny lady.

His friend used to say, "Akiyama is a luchy man! He is able to change horses (meaning remarried and became groom). Well, people don't understand inside of you. They know only what they can see. They used to say a lot of thing about us and about the other woman and I did feel very good about that. However, when I considered Papa's (my husband's) deep thought, then I'm glad for what happend.

Q: Then his father was here.

A: Oh, yes. He was a very stubbon man. He participated in Sino-Japan War and also Russo-Japan war. He volunteered to be a guard at the Emperor's Palace, too, when Taisho Emperor was 6 years old. Well, this small emperor came out and hit him by saying "Bakatare" (you fool!). He was decorated for his breavery, too. He had a good voice and was able to read and write. He was a small person but was very able.

He used to tell us that when they were marching during the Russo-Japan War, he made up his mind to die there. He kept his diary and it is with his bone placed in the family grave. He was a very able person.

Q: What happen at the Russo-Japan War?

A: Well, they got into a hand to hand combat and he was wounded. He laid there pretending that he was dead. However, he also had a gun ready to shoot himself incase an enemy soldger try to stub him, he could kill himself first. This was his favorit story.He was such a smart person. He was such a talkative person. He was made "Bunke" (loss of right to inherit parents property) by his parents, so he didn't have any possessions at all. Before he died, my husband built him a beautiful house. Well, he made his cousin as his son, so that he could look after him and succeed his family name in Japan.

Q: I want to go back a little bit. You said that you stayed in Kobe...

A: Yes, we stayed in Kobe for 9 days. You see, he just brought $500 with him. Well, you see, when he went to Lincoln, he borrowed $3,000 so he had to work for Katos. Mr. Yamasaki, who was a man from Fukuoka, felt sory for my husband, because he was such a fing young man. So he loaned my father-in-law, and then in turn gave it to my husband to go to Japan.

It was a kind of peace offering. When he went to Lincon, he took on a partnership with his father-in-law, so he could not stay with his father. It looked as if he left his father, even if it was with a good reason. Grand-Pa didn't feel very good about it. He was left alone. On the other hand, as far as my husband was ocnered, he went there so that he could get separated from his wife.

When Mr. Iwasaki saw this and approached Grandpa saying, "Ojisan, Ojisan, here is $500, please give this to your son. This is the money that he brought home. Well, he didn't even stay in San Francisco because it would cost him if he did. From this money he paid, "Yuino" (dowry) and paid for wedding reception. However, I didn't know anything about this, so I just wanted to leave home as soon as possible. You see, he spent all the money he had by that time.

He was a very good friend of Mr. Shuzo Sueba. He died during the war as a soldger. He borrowed some money from this man because he was out of money. The reason why I know about it is because his note book fell out of his pocket in the ship on the way to America. I found his note saying that he borrowed money from Mr. Shuzo Sueba. So I found out for myself that he didn't have money.

When we arrived at Hawaii, we stayed there over night. We could stayed in a hotel on the Island, but he couldn't afford it. We stayed on the ship. When we arrived at San Francisco, Papa's relative, by the name of Tsutsuyo Hasegawa, bought dress and shoe and everything for me.

Well, what happend was that while I was still in Hawaii, the grape ranch was burned down and lost everything they had. Mr. Hasegawa knew about this. So Mr. Hasegawa bought everything for me. When I arrived at Florine, Dr. Tsuda gave him $50. Well, I thought "They say there are money trees in America, and it must be true." It wasn't that. He was borrowing money from him. His loan was increasing rapidly, and we worked and worked and were at the bottom of poverty.

Q: You said that you and your husband borrowed $3,000 and operated grape ranch. Your husband could not realize any profit from it, is that right?

A: Well, all the profit had to go to pay off our loan. In Florin there was no Bank there, so we asked Mr. Kato to hold it for us. He knew then how much we had. So he would ask us to pay off our debts. All his pay check were signed and given up to him. It must have been very difficult for him at that time.

Q: How long did it take to pay off your debt of $3000?

A: It took 3 years of our labor. It might sound very bad, but I patched up my underwear so many times that I could not see the original cloth any more. It was very difficult for us.

Q: Did you regret the fact that you came to this country?

A: No, I didn't. I wanted to come here. In Japan in-law relationship used to be very difficult. It was more difficult then than now. In our town they used to raise silkwarms and make silk. So it looked such a tedious job for me. So, I thought if I could go to America I could escape from all those choirs. Well, I had an aunt in Oregon. She used to send all kinds of things like ribons, silver spoons and others. I used to collect spoons.

Q: Well, then when you came to Florin. What did you do there?

A: I worked hard. We carried blankets and stayed one to two months here and a few months there. I remember now

after he got divorced from the former wife, he went to Lodi or Fresno and made about $900. He paid all that to cover his debt. He didn't have a peny with him. He used to say, "I borrowed money and was helped, however, I could not distinguish people between persons who pay and would not pay." This is very difficult.What he ment was that Mr. Kato will show him a check, but he had to sign it and turn it over to him, you see. Mr. Kato did not allowus to let us mannage that debt. He took all our earnings. It was very regretable to him that Mr. Kato seemed not to distinguish between people who would pay off debt and those who would not.

My husband was a very strict person. He used to scold me for hours. This happened 9 years after we were married. Grandpa was a quite lover. He had a good voice, and was able to write well and was very popular. On top of that, he was a very smart person. So he could remember everything. People used to call him walking history book. However, he was very difficult for me to get alone. When he was in Japan he changed his wife 5 times. He must have been tremendously able person. He used to say, I had 7 and 1/2 wives. So I asked him, "It dones't make sense. What does that 1/2 mean?" Then he said, "Well, the last one went back home before she reached my house." He used to laugh about that.

Well, Grandpa was a very lonely man because Papa got settle down with his wife. He got left out by himself. So he was very lonely. So, he 'slid' into a widow's house. Do you understand this 'slinding'? Since he was a slind-in, he had to come home some times. So we leased a house, so that he can come home. I said,"Grandpa need a wife, so he should get marry to her." But Papa didn't agree with me. Well, finally 3 of his friends helped him to get marry. So there was a wedding ceremony, too. Those three helpers (go-between) were very responsible and respectable men of Japanese community, such as Mr. Tamazo Tanigawa, Mr. Nobuso and Mr. Oka. Well, next day Grandpa went to Mr. Tanigawa and said, "Thank you for what you had done for me last night. However, I have one son and he sould be the prime person in this celemony, because if anything happens to me then he has to take care of me." Well, he was such a smart man. They said that they apologyzed for their unwelcomed intervension.

They were together for a while. However, he had a strock and had to go back to Japan. By that time my husband had built a house in Japan already for him, and his cousin was entered into his "koseki" (family tree or record) so that he could take care of Grandpa. By that time this woman was very old. In any case he wanted to take this woman back with him, but she put a condition on her accompanying him. Well, he didn't want that kind of think, so he went home by himself. This is a true story.

In anycase in case she wanted to come back, she should sell the land she had and come home with that money. Well, you see he bought a piece of land when they got married. So, she could sell the land and come back to Japan if she wanted to . When this woman wanted to go back to Japan, she came over and asked her daughter-in-law to make some money forher. Well, this woman brought this old lady to us. However, Grandpa already told her to sell the land and use that money to go back to Japan. You couldn't sell land that easily, however. So she worked at a hotel in Stockton, and finally she went back to Japan. I don't think she went back to Grandpa, though. I heard that she died in Hiroshima. You know, they were married here in America. This old lady was a very unfortunate person, too. She lived with us for about 4-5 years. At that time we had a grocery store in Florin. We had all kinds of merchandise stucked up to the seeling. So we gave her all kinds of food. She used to live very close to us and she could see our water tank. They said that everytime she saw our water tank, she would express her gratitude saying, "Arigato gozaimasu!" She was very unlucky and unfortunate lady.

Although she was a widow, she had a son and daughter-in-law. She had a very beautiful grand daughter.

Grandpa was a very difficult person to live with even as

a Japanese. He was just terrible. You see, we had a grocery store. So he used to cut out the best part of meat and bring it to me and siad,"Hey! Barbeque this for me! I like it rare." I said, "Yes, I will." So I charcoal broiled it for him. He likes it on the rare side. When I said, "Ojisan, you better broil it a little longer." Then he said, "What! You don't want me to eat a good piece of meat. You think its too good for me!" Then he would throw it down on the ground with the dish and all. He was that kind of a man.

Well, this thing happened 9 years after our marriage. We decided that Grandpa should go back to Japan and I'll accompany him. He hasn't seen any part of Japan, so he wanted to see it and was very excited. He said, "I need kimono when I get there, so make one for me."

Well, I had 4 children and I had to cook for 15 people (because we had 6 workers), so it was impossible for me to do it right then. We were getting ready for this, so we were packing candies and others to take with us. We had some money so that he could buy kimomo as soon as he get there.

So I said, "Ojiisan, it seems as if making Kimono for you is very difficult for me. I haven't done it for a long time. The only thing I've done in the few years was to mend socks. So I'm sorry I wouldn't be able to do

it for you. Beside, I know your tast and I'm afraid what I make would be unsatisfactory for you."

Then he got up and was very angry. He said, "What! You can't? My son's wife is a big fool." It was 9pm in the evening. There were some people still in the store. We had our store open till late. Papa came over after he closed the store and said, "What's going on? What are you fighting about. Let's hear from each of you." So we sat there for two hours and expressed our feelings. I gave him credit for being patient listener. Then he said,"OK. I understand it now. However, Mama should not have made Grandpa angry. You better apologyze him. Sit on the dirt floor and bow your head and apologyze."

I cried and cried and was very shagrined. I felt I was disciplined well at home. My parents sent me to school to learn sawing, flower arrangement, Ocha (Tea Celemony) but now I'm placed in a very embarracing situation. I don't know what execuse to make to my own parents. They were being represented with me at that point. So I just couldn't stop crying. However, my husband insisted that I should apologyze.

You know in the old time, the floor was a dirt floor and people used to spit on the floor, too. Well, that's where I was to sit and bow my head. It started around 9:00pm and now its about 11:oopm. I couldn't help, so I apolo-

gyzed. It was about 4:00am in the morning. I woke my husband up and said, "I think I was very wrong to make him angry. I better go over there and apologyze again. So I rapped up some Sashimi and Tako (octepus) and went out with them. His house was about 7 blocks or so from ours. It seemed like he couldn't sleep either. We met in the middle, where an old wearhouse was. There I said, "Ojiisan I'm truly sorry for what I said to you. I apologyze. I was wrong." He said, "I'm satisfied if you understand."

After that we didn't have any trouble. When we went to visit his home village after the war, he said this to his neighbors,"My son's wife is a very wise and good wife. I've been a mean father-in-law to her, but she has never fought me and was always faithful." He said this to everybody in the village. The village itself is a quiet slow moving small town, though.

Q: How old was Ojiisan?

He must have been late 50 or 60 years old. I was about 30 years old. He was a quite a character. When he went home, he bought a new car and took it back with him. The entire villagers went to welcome him. He was also a very good carpenter, too. He once worked for repairing a Castle. He stood up on top of the highest roof by the simbole of that castle (this happend to be a fish) and showed off to the people down below saying who was higher,

him or fish. That night at the celebration of the completion of the project, a maid told him to run away because the chief was mad at him for standing up at the highest spot, even though he was not the chief of the construction group. So that's how his life was spared. So he was a quite able person.

He made a wearhouse and also a water tank above it. He used to donate quite a bit of money to the local school. So student used to take their hats off when they saw him on a street. In any case he was a quite character.

Papa and I were talking for a few years that we should write a book about our life, because Papa went through a quite bit of struggles. He came to America when he was 19 years old. We came back to Japan and stayed 13 years after the World War II, and came back to America and started from scratch. So I think as long as we are healthy, we can do almost anything we want.

Q: When you came here, you carried blanket and worked on fields for 3 years. Then what did you do?

A: Yes, we did. Then, it was also very interesting. You see, we worked as farm labors for 3 years, carrying our blankets and moving from one camp to the other. Then we heard that a fish market in Florin was on sale. At the time we were considering opening a restaurant with two other parters. However, this restaurant had a big loan and we couldn't get in without paying off that loan. So

Papa was working as a gardener. We were there for 4 months. We had $900 and we lost most of that money while we were there.

This fish market was owned by Mr. Hayashi . It was on sale only for one thausand or so. It was such a low cost when you think about it now. So we said to Ojiisan,"Would you please loan us $500 to buy that store? We'll surely return it to you." So this money became the down payment and we made payment for the rest of the amount.

So that's how we started our fish and grocery market. Ojisan had a quite bit of money, because Papa would save as much as possible and gave the money to him. So he had a lot of money. Before we got married, Papa would work till 12:00 midnight on the 40 acre of grapes. Then he went to pick Grandpa up in the town of Florin. He was at Ryoria and beingentertained. He went into town with horse buggie. Ojiisan was drunk and his hat, clothing, shoes and the rests were all over the place. By the time he brought Grandpa home it would be about 2:00am in the morning. After he came home he would play "Taiko" because he liked it very much and drunk somemore. However, Papa had to get up early in the morning to take care of the ranch. I suppose that's why a Japanese Newspaper wrote an article about a "Oyakoko seinen" (You man who loved his father).

The reason why I know about this is that Mr. Nishi, who was a chairman of the Nikkeijin Kai in Florin, had an article in my village. This person had a Niece in Kyoto. Well, Mr. Nishi happend to drop in on my father's store back in Japan and talked about this famous young man whose article was on the newspaper. He said, "I read about this model young man by the name of Akiyama on the paper. I'm really inpressed. I hear he came back to visit, so I'm going to bring my niece from Kyoto so that she can meet him."

Well, this Mr. Nishi was also in America, so he must have known Akiyama family well. He even had the newspaper bublished in America. I really felt I had lost a chance. But you don't know your fate. It's so unpridictable.

Q: When did you buy that store?

A: It must have been 6 years after I came to America. You know Papa came back to Florin to make Mochi for Ojiisan for the new year. That's the time when Papa heard about the sale of that store. When I heard this, I thought it was a very good omen. I knew something about business, t-o. I said, "I don't mind working on fields, but we should go into business. I like it better that way." Papa said, "I don't have any money with me."

We didn't have money, because he couldn't find a job in Oakland. We had to pay rent which was $45 a month. We

were in partnership with 2 other people. I had to be super sensitive with other families, so my nurve was worn out. I was pregnant with the second child, too. We came back to Florin in Feb. I wanted to try it even if we didn't have money. That's me, you know.

Then we borrowed $500 from Ojiisan and made that as the down payment. From that time on, I drove a car for 3 years while I had never done before. It was a Ford. There is a place called Carionbenia (?), it was toward Elk Grove. There was a big camp where 230 workers lived. There must have been 400 acres of grapes ranch. I had to deliver food to them by 9:00am. I had to make Tofu and others. It was a big job. When I got there, I had to unload them and cut up meat and vegetables. I had to take meat in a larg box. Once when I got there I could not find the meet box. So I back tracked trying to find it. Well, I found the box but the meat was gone. Then, I had to come back, picked up another box and went back. I helped them to cut meat everyday. It was like that in the begining. Even tofu, too.

If Tofu didn't have enough "Nigari" (brine)', it got real soft and the shape disintegrated, so I had a real mess. I used to take 4 gal canful of Tofu, so you can imagin kind of mess I got into. It was really difficult. A lady by the name of Mitani used to be the cook there. She was really mean. If I were a few

munites late, she would complain bitterly.

You see, i had to deliver seabass or meat and vegitables. I made deliverly for 3 years. I drove a truck without a driver's licence. It was a quite job. Once I had to carry a tofu can on the drivers seat and holding it with one hand and held the wheel on the other. I over stired it into a dich. Not only that, I could not make it on time, but I couldn't get out of there for a long time, since there was a very little trafic. Than a gastank truck passed by. So the driver helped me to get out of the dich. It was the Ford open car.

Once when I arrived at the destination, Icouldn't find any Daikon. I had about a dozen to begin with. So I must have lost it on the way, because I didn't know how to pack them well. When I think about the past it really looks silly sometimes. Now, you have a nice Van with a door, however, at that time we brought it with $75 and I was driving it without any lessens. When I think about it, it is a mirracle that I was able to go through with it without any major accident.

Human life is really a tremendous thing. I really feel that the suffering and pain that I experienced back in those days h-d tought me a greal deal. I'm truly thinkful. My husband was a very strict and serious person. He used to scold me and tell me all kinds of

things. Sometimes I look back and say to myself, "That's right. He was quite right about this, or that. I didn't like it at that time, but now it has changed to the sense of gratitude. I'm very happy because I am now able to feel thankful about those things happened in the past. So now I don't think these events to be just a hardship.

Q: How along did you have that grocery store?

A: We had it for 18 years. I came to America in 1921. We had the store until the begining of the war and evacuation. You see in this note book I have it written down that soldgers came and naled the doors down.

A FBI agent and 2 police men came and watched us. They followed Papa even when he went to Bathroom. Papa was a very gutsy person. So he was not afraid. He said to them, "I need to shave before you take me." Our friend, Hitoshi san brought whisky. He said, "Lets drink this before you go." So they drunk together. For this even the FBI and plicemen weren't there. They excused themselves during this ritual.

I asked the plicemen with my broken English, "I think my husband is the most wonderful man in the whole world, but why are you taking him away?" He told me, "That's why we are taking him to a nice place where there are lots of beautiful flowers." Well, I thought they were telling me truth, because I didn't understand anything.

That night they took me to a jail. At that time I asked how much he could carry. He said, "Oh, may be $25." I told him to hide it at the tip of his sock. These men were rather curtious.

Q: How was your business during the Depression time?

A: Oh, yes. It was around 1930 to 1931, wasn't it? There were many Japanese people who couldn't pay for food. There were many families here who got paid once or twice a year from strowberries. Papa used to sell them tons of food. There were families with 8 to 10 children, but they could not pay for food. I said to Papa, "Are you sure that thay can pay for this?" However, he said, "Don't say that. They are having such a tough time."

When I visited a family, they were drinking something like Tomato soup, but nothing else was in it. We felt so sorry, so we let them buy food on credit, even though we had no idea whethere or not they could pay us back. All these people are buying food on credit. There were families who accumulated their debt to $4,000. It was a big money.

I can't tell you the name, but this person used to run away from em when he saw me on a street or in a store. However, he found out that I wouldn't ask for his money anymore, so he got real breave. When he saw me the other day he said,"Oh, you're still alive?" Well, this person

passed away recently. There were this kind of people. Papa used to sell rice by tons. He only made 15¢ per Ton. I said,"Papa, you can't even pay gas bill with that!" However, he said, "Well, don't worry. There will be a time when this will help us." Then he gave it to them on credit. We didn't ge a pany from some of them.

There were those people like Mr. Aragaki. He had 11 children. People didn't know too much about counter-ceptives. This man once said,"I keep having children. I use condom, but it doesn't work!" So I said, "Well, probably you aren't using it." I used to tell Papa to buy them a lot for those people who didn't want children anymore. I used to give them to those who were having tough time as they came to buy vegetables.

In any case Aragakis had 11 children. They came back after the war. Mr. Aragaki died about 10 years after-ward. When Mrs. Aragaki died, her sons and daughters sold their property and had a family meeting in San Jose at one of the brothers house. They were strowberry growers there. They had to decide what to do with the money. A few days later the oldest son and daughter came to ask me how much they had owed before the war. However, I didn't remember how much they owed us, since the book was confiscated by the FBI. I asked Mr. Ouchida but he didn't remember either.

I still have that letter with me. It was so beautiful that I want to keep it for my children's sake. The letter had a-l the childrens' signature on it. It said, "On behalf of my parents, we would like to express our grtutude for your kindness shown to us in the past. We will never forget what you had done for us." It also had $600 check included with it. It was after the war and they must have remembered what their parents used to tell them. They were wonderful people. I still have that letter in the drawer of "Hotokesama" (a miniature Buddhist Temple). I'm sure it will be a very good lessen for my children. It was such a precious money that I had offered it to Papa at the Butsudan. I had it put in a saving satificate. I just can't bring myself to spending that precious money.

So there were those people, too. On the other hand there were those who pretended that they had nothing to do with me, even though they owed a great deal to us.

When I saw them (Aragaki children) I told them that because they were such beautiful people, their children would also grow up to be beautiful people like them. A few months agao, one of the daughters who lived in Fresno wrote to me and said,"Please be happy with me. My sons grew up to be such nice young men. They are good Judoists." She encolosed 2 pictures of them. These pe-ple who don't forget "On"(people's kind heart) will

someday become very successful. I really learned so much from them. They were such a beautiful people. It was the debts from the time when things were very difficult. So it must have been appreciated.

In those days, even though people had 10 to 12 children they couldn't buy 4 loaves of bread. Now most of the people go shoping with cars and buy up all kinds of things. But in those days people didn't have that much money. The Depression time was such a hard time.

Q: But how about your store? Were you able to keep it open without going bankrupt?

A: Yes, we were able to keep it open one way or another. Papa was such a honest person. Even though it was very hard at that time, we were able to send Ojiisan home (to Japan).

When I said that it's our duty to send Ojiisan back to Japan because he had a slight strock, Papa said, "What are you talking about! We don't even have enough money for ourselves." So I said, "Yes, we should." And I brought out about $700. We had a big safe. When you stick your head in it, it had a small pocket which no one could find. Even FBI couldn't see that. Any way when I took it our, Papa said, "Where did you get this." He thought that I had made it in a dishonest way. So I said, that I saved up the money for the sale of empty box, such as lettus boxes or fruit boxes, which

they used to buy back for 5¢ or so a piece. Then he was really happy. So he took Papa back home. While he was gone, I remodeled the store and improved the condition of the store. So when he came back he was rea-ly surprised.

A woman always have to serve the family from the "shadow". In any case we couldn't let the Ojiisan go back home by himself. So I let Papa accompany with him. During this time I let workers go, remodeled it, took inventory and brought some order into it. You've got to do this when you have your own business.

We decided all these things within a week, that Ojiisan was to ga back to Japan. On the other hand, he was thinking he had to go back to Japan by himself, so he was feeling uncirtain. So he was saying to Papa, "Hey, you better take me to the depot, otherwise I'm going to be late." So Papa said, "Don't worry, I'm going with you." Then he was so happy and became very strong again!" Ojiisan had a bad leg.

When Ojiisan went back, he received Papas cousin as his son and gave him a wife so that they can take care of him. Well, this woman died, so the only one lelft now is Papa's cousin. He inherited the most of the estate of Ojiisan. There is some more property left. We tried to sell it in Japan, but its such a trouble. It's really difficult.

Q: What else do you remember from prewar period, when you had that grocery store?

A: Well, you know Papa had a very little time to sleep, sometimes only 2 hours. We worked with all our power, so we have no regrets. Even though he died rather young I don't worry about "we should have done this or that." We opened the store at about 6:00am in the morning and closed it at 9:00pm. Sometimes we couldn't close it by 11:00pm. Before the new year by the time we cleaned up it was was already 2:00am in the morning. Then I had to make New Years "Gochiso" (special food). You know Hakujin like Japanese food, such as Osushi or others. They also like rost turkey, too. So I had to make these food for New Years to sell. It was a very tough like. Now I don't do anything. It's like in Paradice.

Q: You said that you made dilivery for 3 years.

A: Yes, but I had to quit because the store became too busy.

Q: What else do you remember from the experience?

A: I didn't make too much mistakes. But we were troubled by checks which bounced. We know those who wrote such checks. They were Japanese, too. Yes, I remember one. When Papa went to Japan, I was still very young. I was about 30 years old. It must have been after midnight when I heard a knowck on the door. So I went to the door. Then this man siad, "please, sell me some ice because my child has a temperature." I said,"Oh, that's too bad, wait a second." When he came in, he wasn't interested

in ice. He was interested in me. So I jumped out of the door and run away. He was such a rude man. After that this man had no guts to see my face. He looked away when we passed on a street. It was such a shame. He was a respected man in the community, too. He was also a chairman of the Nikkeijin Kai. So woman must be on gurd all the time.

Q: Were there many such person?

A: It was terrible before I came, they say. But this was the only time for me. I must be a lucky person. You see, there were so many Japanese in Florin, so...however, it was a very nice place to live, though.

The store was very popular. People used to say that there will be Akiyama Bank, soon. I think it was because Papa was such an honest man.

Q: How long did it take to bounce back from the Depression?

A: It didn't take too long.

Q: Were you able to collect money from those who owed you a lot?

A: No. Because of the war many of the prewar credit was lost. There were those who returned money thanking us. Those were 3 to 4 hundred dollar credits. However, there were those were not willing to pay us back. There were also people who paid their debt to me, instead of my daughter-

in-law. However, I gave it back to my son's family saying, "Here, I got this goday." Because we are all one family.

Sometimes, I think I was lucky to be able to have some money saved up secretly. This is the money that helped my family when they were financially in trouble. All my sons, even the one who came back from Japan, had forgotten about those tough days. But I am very thankful that we can live peacefully now.

Q: Did many single people come to your store?

A: Yes. They all bought things from us on credit. Some are good with payment, but some weren't. They all had only one income at the harbest time, so it was very difficult for them, too. However, Papa did not like to ask for payment. When Papa went back to Japan, he took all the money we had, so we had very tough time operating the store. So I took one of the worker and went around the countryside collecting money from our customers, explaining our situation. Some of them told us, "What are you talking about! You loaned us because you had money." Well, it seemed to me the whole thing was upside down.

I told them, "Because Gandpa and Papa had to go back to Japan, so please buy merchandise with cash from now on. You could pay the balance up to this point on your pay day." One loaf of bread was 11¢ to 13¢. It's hard for me to immagin that they didn't have even 15¢

with them. Many people told us that they could not come to our store any more. I seemed to me that because they owed us a lot, so it would be natural that they sould continue to come and buy from us. However, there were many people who passed in front of our store, making noises with their big foot steps on the boardwalk and went to other store. However, the most important thing is the sincerity and honesty.

You see because Papa was such an honest man we became a matchmaker for 15 couples. One of which was unsuccessful. The man remarried, but the woman has not been married since then.

Q: Have you had any unpleasent experience with white folks?

A: No. I haven't had any, even though we had many white customers. Most of them were on the cash basis, though. However, one thing I remember was about Mrs. Macamba. She lived behind our house. Her husband worked for electric company. They came to buy things from us. Sometimes she would buy on credit. She used to criticize me that I didn't understand any English. So I began to study words like "Fish" or "Meat" and others. Because of this I was able to write something in English. During the time of Relocation Camp, I went to English classes. However, now that I haven't used it for a long time I forgot everything, even those words that I used to know.

Q: The only thing about this person, Mrs. Macamba, was that she criticized you for not being able to write in English.

A: Yes. When we evacuated, we gave her our wash machine and other things.

Q: How was the situation around Florin before the Pearl Harbor?

A: Papa used to entertain dignitaries from Japan. When His Excellency Tsuruki Maruyama came, Papa threw a party in his honor in the upstair. So when FBI came, he asked what was the connection with the Japanese Government. Well, you know, the only thing here was that people of the town of Florine wanted to welcome him, that's all. He also asked him why he landed in Seattle the last time he came back to America. He usually landed at San Francisco, but at that time the ship landed in Seattle and it wasn't his own choice. They knew all the past history of Japanese here. There was a railroad station in front of our store. So he must have been watching us from there.

Q: Before the begining of the war did you experience any bad feelings with white folks?

A: I cannot remember if any.

Q: Well, then when Pearl Harbor was attacked, how did you feel?

A: I couldn't believe it. I kept saying, "It's a lie! It's

a lie!" Before that Papa had a dream. He saw thausands of airplains arranged at the railroal station. You see our house was right next to the railroad station. I told him,"Oh, it's a very strange dream." My friend went to fishing. He came home saying, "It's terrible! It's terrible!" No one believed him. Then, we found out that it was true. In April they posted a notice to Japanese people on telephone poles. We were really afraid.

It was around 3:00pm in the afternoon of March, I wahsed my hair. Five Filipinos came to hold us up. One of them was in the car and 4 came in the store. They took avocados and cut the core out and started to eat them. I was cleaning and cutting salmon, so I said, "Hey, it would tast better if you put salt on it." So I gave them salt. But one of them said, "No, I like it this way." and was biting into it. Then two small children came to buy ice cream. So I went over to the counter and scooped up into corns. Then I saw those 4 Filipinos grabbing money from the cash register and stuffing them into their pockets. So I was really mad, because here I was trusting them and trying to be kind to them. It was on Saturday so I said to the kids, "You didn't go to school today, ha?" When I looked at the cash register all the bills were gone except a few changes. So, I said, "Wait a minute! I'll call my husband." He was taking a short 10 mi nap. He was there right next

to the store, but he couldn't hear what was going on. I called Papa many times. Then one of them said, "I'm sorry I made a mistake." As he said that they were backing out of the store. There were some men working outside. There was a town baseball game on, so it was broadcasted on a radio station and our boys came righ back. Then, they notified police of the car and everything. Soon we were notified that they were captured in stockton. The car belong to a white woman. She gave us information about the boy, because she loaned the care to them. That's why it was easy to catch them. In any case they were already in Jail in Elk Grove.

On the next day a police came and took me to the jail to identify them. He said, "Why don't you put a hundred doller bill in my pocket?" He was joking, of course. It was a white police man. So I went with him to Elk Grove. They said that if they had knife or pistol, then their sentense will be heavier. However, they didn't have any of these, so they came out in 6 months or so. They had the same stocking because I remembered it very well. I could identify them all. The police told them to take out all the money they had in their pocket, and return them to me. Well, I didn't want to take that money back, so I told him to donate it to a church or salvation Army. I still remember the stair that they gave me at the police station. I still remember their faces.

It was the 6th day after Papa was picked up by a FBI, that one of them called me and said, "Are you Mrs. Akiyama?" So I said, "Yes, I am." Then he said, "Are you sure you are Mrs. Akiyama?" He asked me twice, so I said I was Mrs. Akiyama. Then he siad,"I'll kill you in a little while! So you better wait for me!" When I heard it my legs start shaking.

Hitoshi san was staying upstair. We had 8 rooms in the upstair. So I crawled up the stairs and told him what I had heard on the phone. I was really afraid. Then he called the police department. They came day and night and patrolled around the store for one week! I don't even know whether or not he came around our house. I suppose it was because I identified them and put them in jail. I tried to find the newspaper article about this fire, but I couldn't find it.

It was the same group who held up 4 or 5 stores such as liquor stores in Sacramento. The news that Mrs. Akiyama cought those boys got on a newspaper. So many people from Sacramento came to see me. They thought that I must be a devil like woman. Well, they found out that I wasn't a devil, so they wrote about that on the newspaper, again. We laughed about it. You know, people in Sacramento could not catch them.

Filipinos we knew were very gentle people. We used to

employ them. Some farmers had 10 to 20 Filipinos working on their field. So we had lots of business with them. You see, Japanese could not come to America any more so Filipinos were allowed to come. Japanese employed many of them. However, we had only Japanese boys working in our store.

There were some Japanse who tried to steal some fruits or something from us, too. They would buy lemons for instance, and then on the way our they put apples and oranges into their basckets. Nisei are really clean and honest people in comparison to Issei of that time. There were also those Filipinos who tried to steal from us. We lived in Florin for a long time, so I still like to recall about Florin.

Q: What happened after the Pearl Harbor?

A: Well, we continue to operate the store.

Q: When did FBI came?

A: It was in the end of April. I think it was because of his involvement with "Kendo". He used to take kids to Fresno and LOs Angeles and even to Seattle for Kendo Match. They thought that he was in contact with Japanese government. The FBI came to pick him up. We were separated from 2 years. It was very unplesent to have a FBI agent visit us. I remember it was in the afternoon. They tried to find guns and swards all over the house.

They even searched the sealings and toilet. They looked very uncomfortable, themselves. Somebody brought us whisky, so we drunk it together for the last time. I found that her had to stay over night at the Sacramento Jail. Then, he was to be moved out of Sacramento.

The thing which hurt us most, I think,was that all of our correspondence, books and notes were in Japanese. Later on the FBI brought an interpreter. You see, when we were at Fresno Assembly Center, I wrote to him a letter telling what happened there. One day a drainage of the toilet got stuck, so they opened it up and found a baby stuck in it. The government had the responsibility of these things, I suppose, so they came to investigate it. What I wrote in the letter was that even this kind of things happened in the Center, and even though our first son was a very popular boy among girls, you don't have to worry about him, because he was a very reliable and good boy. Well, appearently they read my letter and came to investigate the truthfulness of the event. They asked me if I were there when they opened the drainage. I said, "No. That's what people talked about. The only thing I said in the letter was that even though people talk about these things, my boy did not get involved with girls here. That's all." Then the government official told the interpreter, "I'm glad to know that Japanese mothers are interested in childrens education. Please thank her for me." So the all the letters were inspected, I round out. We knew where Papa was, so I

could send letters to him.

Then I received a letter from a white friend that our house was burned down. She saw it on a newspaper. It said that by the time a fire engine came from Sacramento, it was too late. The whole house had burned down by that time. She sent me the newspaper clip with the letter. I just can't find that newspaper clip now. I wrote to Papa about that, but I did not receive any reply about it. So I'm sure it didn't reach him. So, next time I said that some one got in the house,made a bonfire and warmed himself up. Well, this letter reached him. And this was understood by him that the house was burned down. He expect something like that might happen.

Well, the government held our life insurance which was matured, saving account and evrything. Papa's was $5,000 and mine was $3,000. It was the most important time in our children's life. You see, our children had been in Japan for 5 to 6 years. My first son was 15 years old and when he came back, he was 21 years old. My second son was 14. Both of them were educated in Japan, so they have Japanese spirit.

This happened in the camp. They did not come home till very late. I waited for them to come back, but they weren't home till 11:00pm in the evening. So I waited and waited with a blanket on my lap. You see, Papa was

interned, so he was not there. I had 4 children with me. I was hoping that nothing would happend to them. Soon he came back and said, "I'm sorry." and bowed very formally. I had the "Katucho" (record of the ancestors) and was the treasure of our house. It was the record of the generation of Akiyama family. According to the "Kakucho" Papa would be the 13th generation. I told him to take it out and so he did. Then, I said,"Ichiro, you know what this is. You know you are the first son and Papa is not at home. So you must take the place of Papa in his absense. Besides, I have 3 other children to whom you and I are responsible. So I want you to be very careful about what you do. I just wanted to remind you not to get yourself in trouble carelessly."

He said, "I'll be back home in time from now on." It was a little past 11:00pm. What happend was that some Nisei said that they regretted the fact that they were born as Japanese. There were many of them who throught that way. Some of the Kibei Nisei said,"What are you talking about!! We're gonna burry you alive!!" So they chased those Nisei around. Well, what I was afraid was that my son might have joined this group and got himself in trouble. If he make such a big mistake, I wouldn't know how to explain myself to Papa for not being responsible to his children. He is the oldest son and was in a very responsible position. He understood me very well, and after that he was back home before 11:00pm. So the life in Camp for 2 years was very difficult.

On the 3rd year we joined Papa at his internment Camp. I just don't remember where it was. There were about 2,000 German and Japanese. I think it was Christal City or something. When Papa was home, there was a dignity about him, so I didn't have to worry too much. However, many young boys were gambling and smoking. Even their good friends used to excape from the window and fooling around, when they became 14 to 15. However, my boys were not involved in those things either.

Q: Your husband got picked up in April. What happend to the store?

A: Yes, it was really difficult to take care of the business. So we were able to return the rice back to the wholesaler. However, we had can goods, sake in many kegs and so on in large quonity. So we sold what we could, returning the rest, if we could.

Q: The house and the store belonged to you?

A: Yes, we held the largest amount of stocks on it, so he was the majority owner. Then we went to Fresno Assembly Center. Then, we went to Denson Relocation Camp. You see, it was very interesting. If you clean up the toilet, they gave you $8.50 per month. When the government officer asked people the volunteer, no one raised their hands, so I raised my hand and became a toilet cleaner. Then they said, "I can't go into the toilet and sit down on the comode which Mrs. Akiyama had cleaned." There

were those who went to the next camp to go bathromm. Well, if they feel that way why didn't they clean bathrooms themselves. When I left the camp, some people asked me to give them my job.

Q: According to this document you stayed in Denson (Rowher, Arkansus) for 7 months. Then, you went to Christal City.

A: Well, we went there, and my husband was moved to the place to join us. However, after I got there things got a lot easier. This place was said to be the place for POW's. Mostly for officer class. So those people were very nice.

Q: How was the Fresno Assembly Center?

A: Well, it was Ok, except that it was very hot over there. When we were lining up in front of a mess hall, many people fainted because of extream heat. So we had to cool them down by cold water and fanning.

Q: Was there any trouble in the Assembly Center?

A: No. I don't remember any. I stayed there only for five months.

Q: How was in Arkansus?

A: Well, you see I was cleaning bathroom, so I could tell very well. I could see the evidences of some one who were fooling around. So I thought that the rumore about the baby stuck in the drain was true.

Q: You stayed in the Christal City the longest.

A: Yes, I think we were there for 2 years. I believed that Japan would win, so even though the Emperor spoke of defeat with tears, I could not believed it. It was in Christal City. Some one came into our room and advised us that we didn't have to get on the ship and go back to Japan, even if we singed our names to do so. He said "You just have to shake your head sideway and tell them that you don't understand English. That's all." He told us this after he locked the door, so that no one can hear his voice. However, we didn't listen to his advice.

When we arrived at the Uraga Bay, we saw Japanese people gathering up plastic bags floting on the water. Those were the bags which GI's stuffed table scraps and threw them over boad. I finally realized that Japan had lost the war. The night we couldn't sleep.

Next day I saw my friends' faces on the ship. They had changed so much over night that I couldn't recognize them any more. They lost the will power to eat. Even Papa and my children made up their mind to committe suicide. However, Papa finally changed his mind and told us that the reason why we came back here was to see our parents and also our sencond son, who stayed in Japan. He thought it would be his responsiblity to see our parent and our son first.

Well, fina-ly we came back to the home town. We did come back, but we ate only wheat and no rice. Even though my boys were in their most youthful time, they could not lift heavy things. No power at all.

When we tried to get on the train, there were so many people on the plathome that we could not reach the train. Some people were crawling through the broken window. It was just a mass of confusion. Because Papa had a store and Florin and also was a cook in the Camp, he was well known person. So many people wrote to him asking for help for getting a job. It was almost like beggers' existence. We sold whatever we had to buy food.

Soon Papa found an opportunity to start mining business. It was tungsten mine in Yakushima. It was on the Government land, and we needed to make $20,000 Yen to make a go. But soon we couldn't make that goal, so we had to give it up. We sent them to Fukuoka to purify the Tungsten. But it did not contain enough element. At that time we used 14 people. Papa was a very nreligiousperson, so he wore Japanese Kimono made of unbleached cotton and had a priest give a special prayer before we began.

Well, we were taken, I thaink, because we were just desparate for some job. There was a big water fall, and in order to reach the summit, where the mine was, we had to walk many miles. The native people used to

make a ladder by vines, and climbed up the steap hills very ealily. However, we had to go around the hills. So it took a long time for us to reach the mine. After I came back from the mine, I had to cook for 14 people. It was hard because they could not grow very many vegitables or grains there.

Well, when we went there, we looked up our friend from Onomichi. His wife was blind, and they said that if she ate a snake, she would be able to see. So she did and it looked like her eyeballs were going to jump out of the sockets. We stayed thre a little while. When we left Yakushima, we left everything we had there. We had quilt, clock and all kinds of things make in America. But we left them with this man's family. In fact we went bankrupt and came back to Papa's home town.

It had no toilet inside. I had to go to outhouse and it was so dark in the night so I had to ask my humband to watch me. It was also a very rainy place. They also put big rocks on the roof, so that the wind would not blow the roof away.

Papa gave our nice singer sewing machine. So one day I went out looking for one. I found just one sewing machine which was called Bunka Sewing Machine in the entire ilsand. At that time people had nothing to eat, no vegitables, no rice. They used to put unpolished rice in a "Issho bin" (sake bottle of 3.8 pint) and polish it

by pushing a stick in through the mouth repeatedly. People used to eat sweet potatos and Macro or carp. Not very many people of the Island could afford to eat rice. So I was thankful that at least I could eat rice everyday.

When you walk on the Tatami mat, it bounced a little. So I asked them how the floor was made. They said that it was made by banboo. They also grew "zabon" (Pompelmous).

Well, I was able to see all kinds of places, so I have nothing to complain. We stayed in Yakushima for one year. My husband must have stayed there for almost 2 years. Then we opened a restaurant with ¥ 6,000,000 Yen Loan in my home town.

You see we owned a coal mine first, and then went into tungsten mining and the restaurant business. We stayed in Japan for 13 years all together. We had that restaurant for 6 years and returned all the debt. We didn't make any money, but we didn't have any debts, either. The reason why we were able to come to America was because our third son sent me money to buy tickets. They sent it to the shiping company but they didn't give it to us. At that time he was a student at San Francisco. He came back here early. It's just us who stayed in Japan for 13 years. Our children were US Citizens, so they could come back here easily.

You see, the third one came back first, and then the second one came back with us. The first son came back one year after us. The second one was working at Haneda, but he was allowed to come back suddenly. The second one sold his house and made money in order to come back to America. I didn't think we could come back together, but it was really fortunate.

Q: I want to go back to Christal City. You were there for about 2 and 1/2 years, right?

A: Yes. Then we came back right away.

Q: What was the reason why you came back to Japan?

A: Well, you see my mother was still in Japan and also my second son. We wanted to see them in person. The second son was going school there and was caught by the war. The first one came back, but the second one wanted to stay in school a little longer. That's why. It was in his 3rd year in the middle school when the war broke out.

This in interesting. A teacher asked in his class who would like to volunteer for the Japanese Army. So many students raised their hands, including my son. People noticed that my son also raised his hand, so they asked him the reason why he wanted to volunteer for Japanese Army (instead of the US Army). He said, "I'm going to fly over America and save my parents first." You see, he did became a pilot and was ready to go to war. It was on that day that the war came to an end

That's why we wanted to go back to Japan. Besides, our house in Florin was burn to the ground and could not go back there, anyway.

When we came back to America, an immigration officer said that it was very strange that our family could come back to America. It happened in Hawaii. When we came to San Francisco, another immigration officer said that we were not supporsed to be able to come back to the USA. In any case he told us to stay around San Francisco, because we would be summoned to the office within one week. Well, we went there a week later. There was an interpreter for us. They asked us if this interpreter was satisfactory for us. Then we were grilled for 4 hours with many questions. They taped all our proceedings. Papa and I were questioned separately. When Papa forgot something and I tried to help him, then they said,"Keep your mouth shut!" The third son was in the US Army and was with us. When they asked him if the interpreter was good enough, he said, "No, he was not."

In any case, the proceeding was taped. At that time we were granted permanent residency. Up to that time we had just a temporary permit. So our case was very complicated.

Q: When was it that your arrived at Uraga Harbor?

A: It was Dec. 24, I believe.

Q: You left for Japan as soon as the war was over, correct?

A: I think so. The war ended on Aug. 15, and we left for Japan in December. We stayed at the Christal City till that time.

Q: Did you voluntarily decide to come back to Japan?

A: Yes, We did. However, we did not have a plan to stay there permanently. You see, we didn't know how my mother and my son were, so we wanted to see them. Well, we found out after we got there that because the war was over, my son went back to my mothers house. When we arrived at the railroad station near my village, he came to see us on foot. That was only 5 cho (about 5 blocks) from the house to the station. I still remember the way he walked up to us.

Q: Who told you that you didn't have to go back to Japan?

A: Well, we petitioned to go back to Japan. We filled in a government paper. However, a white man came to see us and said that even though we petitioned to go back to Japan, if we didn't want to go, we just had to shake our head sideway. However, we did want to go back to Japan, so we did not listen to the advise. When he came in our room, he locked the door and said that we didn't have to go. I suppose he was very causious. From there we were sent to Seattle. On the way to Seattle a gurd was placed to watch us.

All the blind on the window were drown, so we could not see outside. We thought this must be around Sacramento so I tried to look outside, then the guard said,"No, don't look ourside!" and didn't let us see ourside. Sometimes we were allowed to get off on salten plains and excercised. However, when the train was passing through towns, we were not allowed to look out. The war was over by then, but we were not allowed to see the towns.

Q: Were there many people wnet back to Japan?

A: Yes. There were over one thausand people who went back to Japan at that time. Those people did not believe that Japan had lost. That's why some people tell us that its strange that we came back to America. Well, I have to ignore those people. What Papa would say to those people would be that "People who are useful in America will be useful in Japan, too." That's why he went back to Japan.

Q: You must be surprised when you arrived at Japan.

A: Yes, of course. It can not be expressed in words. When we arrived at Uraga, they gave us 2 "mugi-gohan nigiri" (rice ball made of a mixtur of rice and wheat.) and daikon. That's why my children can't eat daikon to this day because they recall how it was after the war. Everybody had lost power and walking like a sick person. It was OK on the ship, but it was hard after we landed. You see, we couldn't even buy food. We ate "Okayu"

(rice gruel) or pumpkin, wheat or potatos. However, we were prepared to this, so we didn't think of it as unbearable burden.

Then we operated a coal mine with only 3 of us in the begining. Well, they say mine will produce lignite before it produces coal. The owner of the mine dug it quite a bit, but they only thing they could get was lignite and not coal. So they gave it up. We bought this mine, and luckly we hit coal in a week. We began with a small crew, but it grew to 47 workers. However, it got too big and too rough. Papa said, "This work is not for ordinary people, so let's quit." So we did, then we went into the Tungsten mining in Yakushima.

When we began coal mine business, it did very well. Soon we put a road and all the necessary foundation for it to be a good mine. He used to say,"Well, somebody has to do it and no matter who does it, the government will benefit from it. The only thing one has to do is to take it out of the ground. That's all. I'll be very happy to give it back to the government without any payment."

So he gave it back to the government and came home with a tea pot and 3 bowls. When he said it that way, I couldn't say anything. Well, Papa was this kind of person. People talk about owing land, or house or some property and so I say to myself, "Oh, there must be other

kind of thinking about those things." We couldn't own properties or anything, because Papa was such a person, but thing is that we are always reworded in one way or another. For one thing I am very healthy. Our deeds always come back to us.

Q: When you came back to America, you began your petition to reclaim you properties, right?

A: Our third son was told by Papa to do it first. Papa made all the necessary documents. After we came back, we took it to Henry Taketa. He worked on it for 3 years, but he said it was no use. We then took it to Mr. Miyamoto. He said that he couldn't do it, either. He said that it might be possible, but he couldn't tell when it might become possible, unless this kind of case was publicized and a special case was made for it.

So we just held the documents. However, the other day I told Mr. Kato about us. He said that he would like to see the document. He was very interested in it. So I brought those papers to him.

Q: Did Mr. Takeda read the documents?

A: Well, I don't know. I didn't see any enthusiasm from him, though.

Q: Why did the government confiscate your life insurance and savings?

A: It's because we went back to Japan, I suppose. So they held all our property. You see, because of the war Papa was interned and the government confiscated all our property.

Mr. Shimomura was very interested in this case. At that time, we had some assets, such as stocks of a company, for instance. It was enough to get whole sale material for sale. We had the fire insurance money, too. The other day Mr. K.W.Lee of Sacramento Union came to talk to me. He said it is really regretable. He wants to fight it even for principle of things.

There was 5 stock holders. Papa was the largest holder. Trouble is that all those holders were dead now and we cannot do anything about it.

I am a hard worker. People used to tell me that I worked 3 times as hard as th others. That's why Papa used to kid me by saying, "Mama, if the war starts now, then whatever you have belongs to the Government. If the government asks for it, then you have to give everything you have." I really had to give every thing I had.

Q: You had a hard time coming back to America, right?

A: Yes, we did. You see we had all these petitions in mine, so we wanted to come back. We went to the American Counsolet in Kobe many times. It took 2 hours from

Fukuyama and more hours to from Fukuyama. Beside, whenever we came out to Kobe, we had to stay over night at an inn, so it was very costly, too. On top of that the proceedings were very difficult.

OUr third son, Ryozo, went to "Goreichi" of Gedatsu Sect and prayed 200 times every day. If you pray 100 times, your wish will be hear, that what they say. So he went around praying 200 times as he went around the stature of Buddah. Strangely enough his wish was granted, so he called us. Well, it was during the new year. Our restaurant was closed during the holidays. OUr restaurant business was doing well, and returned all our debt. So we felt relaxed and went to movie. It was that time when we were paged and told that we had a phone called from Tokyo. So we came home. The message was that we will be able to come back to America around Feburuary. However, we could not leave Japan until June 30th of that year.

When we got on the ship, people said that we were not supposed to be able to come back to the USA. You know, we have not done anything wrong to be treated like that. That is the way it went. That boy went through quite a trouble for us.

I feel it is very miraculous that we were able to come

back to America. The first son works for Oki Nursery. The second son works for the State and the thrid one is working as a gardener. Papa was a very strict person, so our sons are very gentle, may be too gentle. Papa was too strict, I think. Nowaday young people were raised in laxed atmosphere. We had 4 sons, but they all had to help out in the store. One had to heat bath water by keeping fire under the big bath tub, one had to clean our toilet and others. They all had to do these choirs before they went to school and so it was very rough. When one of the boys did something wrong, Papa ordered him to dip in the water tank right in the middle of December. My son said that he still remembers that incident. So because of his discipline our sons can endure any difficulties and poverties. This world be the value of that strict discipline, I think.

Q: Let's see, when did you come back to America?

A: It would be in June 30th, 1959. Papa had a slight stroke in Japan, so he could not work anymore after he came back to America. He lost his coordination, so when we had that restaurant he used to deliver many bowls of noodle. Some times he sliped on the ice and spilled all the hot noodle on a street. We had to prepare another batch and deliver them again. We used to say that we will lose money on Papa's deliverly. Soon we hired 2 workers.

So he was like that in Japan already. So I would say it was very fortunate that the US government allowed us to come back. Papa must felt relieved being able to come back to America and being close to his sons. Soon after that he did, 3 years after he came back. It would be 14 yours ago. He was 68 years old. He was still very young. Doctor said that even though he was only 68, his inside looked like 80 years old. He worked too hard. He worked hard at the Takane Kanko (Takane Mine) shoveling coals all day and sleeping only a few hours at the store in Florin.

Mining business was a very terrifying business. One of the miners wonted to borrow some money. If you let them have it, they would disappear soon. So he couldn't give it to him. He said, "I haven't gone to the bank so I can't give it to you right now." Then this man said,"What? You can't give me the money? Come outside right now!!" I knew he was going to hit Papa.

It was really difficult to say no to him. We had about 20 miners working for us. Sometimes they fought among themselves. Once some one's wife had disappeared over night. Somebody must run away with her. Those people jump one place to another rapidly. That's why they were called "Tobi" (bird), because they fly from one place to the other. They steal woman, and everything. So it's really tough. They cary knives called "Dosu". Once

there was a fight. One of the mine worker slid others throught and blood gushed out. I saw that with my own eyes. I guess they were fighting over a woman. It was very terryfying experience. So we quit that business. We just could not managed it.

So we tried everything. We borrowed money and worked hard to return it. Papa was working so I had to go around to borrow money. Infact, I borrowed money from all my relatives.

Well, I had to commute from the mine for one week. I had to travel 3 hours to get there. I had to do this in order to visit my relatives and also banks. Bank officials were surprised by my tenacity and finally let me borrow ¥ 500,000 to do that mine business. Well, I needed a cosingner. It so happened that the local maneger's in-law was my distant relative. So this maneger co-singed the paper for me. They asked me how I wanted the money. So I said, "Oh, I'll take cash with me." They said, "You are a very gusty person!" But for this I had to commute one week.

My home town was a small town and I had borrowed ¥ 100,000 once. At that time I needed co-signer, too. But the bank maneger said,"oh, it's OK because we are lending it to Akiyamas." However, it took 6 years to return this debt. We worked and worked, but we always had a debt.

However, we didn't feel it was a burdon for us, because we felt that we had to payback our debt. When we opened our restaurant, our third son was in the US Army. He used to send us ¥ 20,000 to us every month. We had to go to pay back our debt.

When we opened the restaurant, our third son was in the US army. He used to send us Y20,000 to us every month. We had to go to Edajima (where US Navey's instalation was) to receive that money. However, we had to stay over night there and we had to spend a few thausand yen. It was so expensive and b y the time we came home, we had already spent a good portion of that money. So I had asked him to send us every 2 months. So he did. Before that we had to go there every time he sent us money. Otherwise the Navey would send the money back to the sender.

Our restaurant was called "Mama Shokudo" (Mapa's Restaurant) and still continuing today. However, when we began the business it was tough because there was no materials. When I left for America, my father planted a hardwood tree in his back yard. He enjoyed looking at it when my father was still well. He used to say "As long as the tree keep growing, I feel it is the sign that Onatsu is healthy and doing well."

Well, we cut this tree down and made 100 bundle of burning

wood. We split it with my nephew. We used this in the begining of our restaurant business. We pinched pennies and by the time we came back to America we sold it to my brother. It was worth quite a bit.

In the begining we had a sign which said,"Kyukei Jo" (which ment resting place). It was at a corner of a cross road. There was a bus stop. So we began as a noodle shop. On the fifth day there was a joint festival of five nearby villages. So it was a big festival. It lasted 5 days and we made lots of money during the time. When we were in America we used to have a store, but we never had a restaurant. So we didn't know how to operate a restsurant. However, we did it well. Soon we had Chawmein and other noodles, too. We maneged it very well, I think. Later it was expended by my brother. My sister-in-law still writes to me. The last letter said that we had a very keen foresight in this matter.

Q: What was the religion of your parents?

A: They were Zenshu. Papa's side was Nichiren Shu. I am a member of Nichiren Buddhist Temple in San Francisco. The second one is also a member of the same Temple. I was a member of the Temple in San Francisco because Papa was burried by the priest in San Francisco 14 years ago. Well, that's why I was not the member of the local Temple for a long time. However, it is so far away and it was so inconvenient. We went to the service in San

Francisco as often as we could. So now I attend the local Temple service.

Q: You know, young people nowadays are interested in Japanese customs and traditions. Do you think this is a good thing?

A: Yes, of course. This is the way I think. American life is very high standard. It's very good. However, every thing depend on one's heart. So whoever lives according to his faith will succeed. Even through Japanese Americans are minority, everything depends on that. Our attitude is more important than leaving some property. I am very impressed by some of our Nisei leaders. They are wonderful people. However, we will see how Sansei and Yonsei will do. It seems to me they had learned American way of life more than Nisei did. So I'm very glad to know that they are interested in Japanese tradition and values.

Q: As an Issei, what would you like to teach our young people?

A: Just like Papa said, "A useful person in America will be useful person in Japan." In addition, I would like them to be able to speak Japanese. Without language, we will not be able to communicate. Then, one must also discipline his mind, or brain. You just cannot live your life dillydally fashion. When you look at life from the long eye, you can see how much difference it will make between diligent persons and lazybones. One needs to be willing

to try anything and foreward looking. However, without having faith none of this is possible. One needs to have a clear conscience and willingness to discipline oneself. We need to train our children and grandchildren. This is a gift that every parents must give to their children.

Nowadays we see lots of bad criminal cases on a newspapers. It's a bad thing. Once you do that, then it is so difficult to come clean. When I look at my children's life, all of them are strait and clean, so I am very satisfied. However, I cannot garantee what would happen to the next genatation, though. So I would say that religion and moral discipline is important. When I look at Tanoshimi Kai, I am so happy. Young people had started such a good program. Within 10 years most of the Issei will be gone. It will be Nisei time to pass on the tradition to their children and grand children.

Q: Would you read these documents, please?

A: Yes. This one says:

Akiyama family returned to Japan from the Internment Camp. Third son, Ryozo, is in the US Army. Shiro, the forth son is also in the US Army. At the American Consulet in Tokyo, the petition was made for the compensation of the damaged and lost property of an enemy alien. This petition was sent to the US Government by telegraph by the US Consulet.

The amount of petition: $85,000

After returning to America, upon consultation with the New York Life Insurance Company, it was discovered that the Life insurance, $3,000 for Onatsu and $5,000 for Michiharu, had matured and the USGovernment is holding them. Cheching account at the Bank of America is also held by the US Government.

The food which was in the store at the time of evacuation was valued at $85,000. This was also included in the partition.

In addition, 2 houses, dwelling place and warehouse, were held by 5 persons. However, Michiharu was the majority owner. In May 1942 the family was evacuated to Fresno Assembly Center. At that time these two houses were burned by some one. This fact was supported by a newspaper article. However, due to many change of address (6 times), the article was lost. According to theis article, fire engines from Sacramento were dispatched. However, these efforts were in vain.

This is an article which my daughter-in-law wrote for a magazine article.

Looking back the life of a man, even though it is a tragedy created by the war, it is just too regretable to let it disappear a man's life which started out when he immigrated from Japan and had

just like bubles on water. Not one peny was returned to him for the loss incured not only for the goods in the store, but also the loss of the property, such as land and two houses, and also cheching account and life insurance which had matured. According to the sons, life Insurance money is held by the government. The petition for the reparation of damages and losses incured at the store had to be submitted by Ap. 15, 1947. In order to meet this dead line, this petition was submitted at the American Consulet in Tokyo. It was said that the documents were sent by the Consulet to the US Governemnt by airmail.

From Fresno Assembly center, the family had changed Camps several times and finally was able to be reunited with the father and lived in the Special Internment Camp at Christal City. Upon the notice of the end of war, we left for Japan on Dec. 2nd 1945 from Seattle and arrived Japan. Japan was defeated and had no food to eat and the very difficult days continued.

Petition for Reparation of the Lost Property, No. 2.

There was an investigation on our petition and was judged that we had no basis for such petition. Reason: when we left the Internment Camp after the war and came back to Japan, we forfited all our rights

to it. We also petitioned for visa to come back to America. There was ahearing and investigation on July 7th, 1965 and as the result of it the permanent resident status was given to us.

This was our case and we would like to know how we might reopen the petition for reparation of our lost property. I would like you to teach us what we should do. (I suppose we sent this out to somebody.) I also like to know your fee.

This one is also written by me.

After the war, Dec. 2, 1945 we left Seattle for Japan by the boat, Masonia and arrived Japan of Dec. 22nd. On March 28, 1942 my husband was interned at the South Park Internment Camp. In my husband's absence the store was nailed down from outside by soldgers and they had posted notices on the window. The name of the store was Florin Fish Market.

This was written after we came back from Japan.

Although Japan was recovering from the deverstation of the war, Shiro could not forget his native country. So he came back to America first. We wanted to come back to America as soon as possible, but we were not allowed to come back. However, finally we received the permission to come back to America in May of last year, 1959), so my husband and I,

Taneo and his wife and 2 grand daughters, all together 6 people, came back to America on June 30, 1959 and landed at San Francisco. The 6 months after we arrived here and things are passing like dreams. My husband Michiharu became 66 years old. He has become old and can not hold any jobs. He just helps his children. By accident, I saw an article by the president Susumi Shimamori on the new year, on Hokubei Newspaper and I began to look back our life during the past 20 years. I began to write down some of my memories. I do not have a citizenship. If we were permitted, I would like to fulfill this wish. Please help me in any way you can.

This is the lettere by Mr. Shimamori.

I read your letter dated on Jan. 16, this morning. Your case is a very interesting case. However, I need to study more about this. One thing I would like you to do. Please join our organization. The due is $10 for two of you. We do not charge any fees. We will help you as much as we can. Your case is about the reparation for the loss of property at the time of evacuation and return of the money (insurance money and the Bank of America Checking account) from the US Government. Your letter is too brief for me to know the case in detail. So please answer fallowing questions as much as possible.

This one says, "Akiyama Michiharu was interened by FBI agents on march 28, 1942 and was placed in the South Park jail in Sacramento. He was also in the Christal City, new Mexico, with his wife and 3 sons, Ichiro, Ryzo and Shiro. (Tanoe was in Japan.)

May 26, 1942 - Oct. 22, 1942 Fresno Assembly Center. Here we learned that our house and store ware burned to the ground.

Oct. 26, 1942 - May 16, 1943 Denson, Arkansus

May 21, 1943 - Dec. 2, 1954 Christal City, New Mexico

Dec. 2, 1945 - Left for Japan

Dec. 22, 1945 - Arrived at Uraga, Japan

You know on the way to Japan, we took all the money we were allowed to take. We received $85 a month in the camp from our own checking account. So we bought whatever we needed and the rest we took with us to Japan. However, on the ship someone said, "If you have any money with you, I will keep it for you, because it is dangerous to keep it with you. Some one might steal it from you." So we asked him to hold it for us without asking him who he was, his name and we received no receat. Well, when we arrived at Uraga, this man just disappeared. This man was a white man.

At Uraga when we saw people collecting left over food of GI's like beggers, we felt that we made the biggest

mistake of our life. No one on the ship felt like keep living anymore. In fact we felt like committing suicide. That night everyone felt like that. People's faces changed over night and we could not recognize each other on the next morning. Those were the faces of dead people. We forgot all about the money that we were supposed to receive back from that white man.

They gave me the saving account which had my name on. However, before the war people did not put wives names on the Bank account. He was the only signator, so these accounts did not come back to us. Papa used to say, "Think of it. Our children have such big bodies. They were raised in this country, so we should consider that even this much would be thankful. Don't think about it as a loss!" They are all nice boys, so when you come to think of it, I think, "Oh, I don't need anything."

I feel that as long as you are healthy, we are able to see many sides of human beings. We sure went throught many events. I was rather sickly before the war. I didn't go to bed with a simple cold. Well, child birth, 4 times for instance. The third one was 11 lb, when he was born. So I was dissy for 9 days after the delivery. So I ended up staying in hospital for 23 days. It was in June and was hot. I asked the doctor to change a room for me. He said, "Don't say such a selfish thing. You should be thankful that you are slive, today."

That baby was so heavy that when I was carrying him, I could not lift my leg. This doctor, Dr. Iso, was a German ancestory. He was a very kind person and when we were evacuated, he came to see me and said that because my babies were so big, I might have a trouble in my menoposal period. He also gave me a medicine to take when the time comes. This doctor was a very famous doctor.

Q: Did you answer the loyalty questions?

A: Oh, yes. There were many questions. I think it was the No.27, which said, "Do you obey Japanese Empelor or American President?" I answered "No" and "NO". So I would be classified as No-No. Well, Papa wasn't there with us, so we didn't know what to do.

Q: How did you feel about the fact that Nisei had to go to the Army?

A: Well, I don't think you can't help about that. They are Americans to begin with. So they had that obligation. However, the American government should not have put them in the Camps, if they were going to draft them, though. It's their mistake. However, looking back, Nisei had to go to the Army because they owe their life to America on the final analysis. Even though they might end up shooting against Japanese Army. They had to go to the US Army simply because they were citizens.

Q: WHEN you went to Christal City, did you petition the government to go there?

A: No. They summond me and my children to come there. However, we were treated well there. I think it's because a-l the people there were POW's who were officers. So they gave us enough milk and butter. When they could not use them, they threw them away in the garden, so that they will continue to receive the same amount.

Q: Were there many families of Internees' in Christal City?

A: Yes, there were many. My sons were good in Kendo, so they tought Kendo to the young people there. However, for the administration, it looked very dengerous proctice. So they asked them not to teach kendo, so they had to stop teaching Kendo. They say when my first son takes up the "Bokken" (wodden sward) his personality changes. Usually he is a very gentle and quiet person, but when he stand there with "Ken" he become very assertive and indistructable. He had become 6th degree black belt. So when the white folks watched him, they became terrified. That's why he had to quit.

They also liked Sumo (Japanese wrestling), too. Once they used to have Sumo match in Fresno. The first and the third sons, both liked Sumo so they played against each other. People were divided and cheered older brother or the younger brother. Well, at that time the third one became imovalized because of the injury. He had an operation a few year before and it seemed that he

reinfured it. He was operated again for the second time.

Q: Thank you very much for your time. May I take you home?

A: No,no thank you. I must walk.

Q: May I copy this document? It says;

May 26, 1942 - Oct.22 1942	Fresno, Calif.
Oct 26, 1942 - May 16, 1943	Jerome, Arkansus (Denson)
May 21, 1943 - Dec. 2, 1945	Christal City, Texas (sic)
Dec. 24, 1945	Left for Japan
Dec. 30, 1945	Arrived at Uraga, Japan

The Akiyama Family stayed in Japan for 13 years.

Q: Thank you very again.

A: Thank you very much. I stayed here long time. I don't know how long I'm going to live, but I intend to live at least 5 more years. Do you think I could?

Q: Yes, of course you can.

A: I think so, too. I feel very good, so I'll be OK. I have a good apetite, too. I also exercise regularly. I might eat a little too much, though. It's about 5:30pm isn't it. Good by. I'll see you again.